



AC 2017: *Weekend Edition*

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward and Conference Secretary Jerry Bryan announced that Annual Conference 2017 is scheduled as a weekend conference.

The gathering convenes on Friday morning, June 16, 2017 and concludes mid-day on Sunday, June 18.

Upon Bryan's recommendation at Annual Conference 2015, the body voted to meet at the Greenville Convention Center in 2016-18 in order to be able to book the conference center on the preferred dates as many centers book years in advance.

Bishop Ward explained that the decision to move to a weekend format is to make service as a lay member of Annual Conference "more accessible" for those who work during the week. "We hope this will increase the number of younger professionals who can be a part of Annual Conference," she said.

In addition, the decision was also made to help part-time Local Pastors who have employment elsewhere during the week.

The bishop said that resources are being developed to help educate local churches about Annual Conference and to help churches make use of the conference's network of certified Lay Speakers to preach in local churches on June 18 while the Annual Conference clergy and lay members are concluding the business of the meeting and for the Ordering of Ministry worship service on Sunday morning.



L-R: Deaconess Brenda Brown and Home Missioner Steve Taylor were among the 92 persons recognized, blessed, and sent out in ministry during the Ordering of Ministry service on Saturday morning.

Ordering of Ministry Service:

"Can you imagine a whole village running toward you in welcome?"

The last order of business for Annual Conference 2016 was the ordering of ministry service on Saturday morning. Bishop Hope Morgan Ward used the biblical text from John 20: 19-29 as the foundation for her sermon. This passage in John shares the encounter with the risen Jesus when he breathed on the disciples and told them to "receive the Holy Spirit."

As part of her ecumenical ministry, Bishop Ward is the presiding bishop for the Methodist Initiative in Vietnam. During a visit there in February, she heard the story of a woman who had been born in Vietnam to a Vietnamese mother and an American soldier father. As an infant, she was turned over to an adoption agency, which brought her to the United States, where she grew up.

As she grew older, she longed to go find her birth village and possibly her birth mother, realizing that the search would be very difficult with so little information. She traveled to Vietnam and with the assistance of a guide, she visited several villages with no luck. But one day, while sitting and drinking coffee, she looked up and saw her guide running toward her with a woman, and not only one woman, but the whole village, running toward her. Her mother embraced her, and the whole village embraced her, telling her they had been longing and praying for the day when she would come home.

"Can you imagine a whole village running toward you in welcome? ... What if the Church of Jesus Christ ran toward the world



L-R: Bishop Hope Morgan Ward looks on as the Rev. Sara Beth Pannell, the youngest clergy woman being ordained at Annual Conference 2016, addresses the conference wearing a stole presented to her by retired clergywoman Ruth Harper Stevens, the first female clergy elected a General Conference delegate.

Blessed by Women Clergy for 60 Years and Counting

A bold move was made by Dr. Zack Johnson 60 years ago on the floor of General Conference in Minneapolis, MN. After a great deal of debate, discussion, amendments, and amendments to the amendments, Dr. Johnson went on to the floor and said, "I move that we amend the substitute motion by changing the phraseology so that paragraph 313 will read as follows: 'Women are included in the foregoing provisions, and may apply as candidates for the traveling ministry as provided for in Chapter 3 of the *Discipline*.'" This statement changed the lives of all women who have felt called by God to serve in ordained ministry.

The strength of ordained clergywomen began slowly, but today there are nearly 10,000 women doing ministry across the globe. In the North Carolina Conference, there are nearly 300 clergywomen.

The first to be ordained elders in the North Carolina Conference were Gladys Williford and Helen Crotwell in 1975. Helen Crotwell later became the first female district superintendent in the North Carolina Conference.

Others recognized on June 18 at Annual Conference were the longest tenured clergywoman: Gayla Collins, with 39 years; the first woman clergy elected to General Conference: Ruth Harper Stevens, elected in 1984; the first female bishop from the NC Conference, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward: elected in 2004; and the youngest clergywoman being ordained at Annual Conference 2016: Sara Beth Pannell.



Lay Missioners were among those recognized in the Ordering of Ministry service on Saturday Morning. Lay Missioners are committed laypersons who are trained by and work with a pastor-mentor to develop faith communities, establish community ministries, develop church school extension programs, and engage in congregational development.

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the way that village ran toward that woman as she came home? That is our calling. That is our challenge. That is our joy, and that is our destiny because we are lovers of the One with nail-print hands and feet and gashed sides, who is alive forevermore and who says to us on this day, 'Peace be with you! Receive the Holy Spirit.' "

Ninety-two persons were recognized, blessed, and sent out in ministry during this service - 20 lay missioners, one home missioner, one deaconess, 37 licensed local pastors, two ordained deacons, 17 provisional members, and 14 elders in full connection.



(L-R) Bishop Hope Morgan Ward places a stole on Varonica Livingston (above) and Liz Hounshell (below) as the Rev. Ned Hill and Lay Leader Gary Locklear look on.





"The light shines in darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it," said Bishop Hope Morgan Ward as she announced a prayer vigil held Friday evening in memory of those who died in Orlando.



The Chancel Choir from Prospect UMC in Robeson County lifted powerful voices in praise during Friday evening's laity celebration.

Communications Updates: ECHO & Every Day Grace

In his video presentation on Friday, Derek Leek, NCC Director of Communications, announced a new initiative, Every Church Online (ECHO). Through this initiative, each church in the North Carolina Conference will receive assistance and resources to help them create a basic church website. To get started, please email communications@nccumc.org.

The newest edition of *Every Day Grace* magazine, celebrating rural church life, was distributed at Annual Conference. Copies are available by contacting the communications office. Over 14,000 people tuned in to the last episode of the conference's *Every Day Grace* tv show.



Special Offerings

*Rotifunk Hospital, Sierra Leone
\$5,887.54 helprotifunk.com*

*Flint Water Crisis - Michigan Area
United Methodist Conference - \$2,363.82*

*North Carolina Mission Endowment \$9,189.57
Supporting new missions in Eastern NC*



As the appointments were announced, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward (center) gave thanks for Bob Bauman's (left) service as District Superintendent of the Harbor District and introduced Edith Lee Gleaves (right) as the new Harbor District Superintendent.

New appointments announced

During Saturday morning's session, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward recognized the new appointments in each of the eight districts. These new appointments included local church appointments as well as those appointed to various extension ministries. A total of 152 clergy received new appointments, which they will assume on July 1, 2016.

Bishop Hope also gave thanks for Bob Bauman's service as District Superintendent of the Harbor District and introduced Edith Lee Gleaves as the new Harbor District Superintendent.

A PDF of the complete 2016-17 Appointment Book is available for download at nccumc.org/bishop/appointment-book.

NCC Director of Communications:

Derek Leek

AC 2016 Communications Team:

Nathaniel Belles, Jacob Blount, Julie Brown, Marty Cauley, Suzanne Cobb, Chris Daniel, Mary Warren Dickens, Christine Dodson, John Hall, James Henderson, Jay Locklear, Mary Frances McClure, Joe Parker, Anne Sims, Chuck Smith, George Speake, LeeAnne Thornton